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ABSTRACT

The role of the family in teaching the child potential behaviors and norms for adult citizenship roles--anticipatory socialization--is explored in this study. Previous research has suggested that the structure of the family's communication patterns play an important role in socialization, and that families can be categorized according to emphasis on concepts or on social relations to produce four different types of families--laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic, consensual. It was hypothesized for this study that a strong concept-oriented family would stimulate a greater degree of anticipatory socialization, and in particular, the combination of weak socio-orientation with strong concept-orientation would give the resulting "pluralistic" child a greater awareness of his expected citizenship norms. Data were collected in a survey of 1300 families on type of family communication pattern and level and intensity of anticipatory socialization. Results of analyses of the data showed that pluralistic students expect that social norms will involve a greater level of political participation, and more generally, children from homes where concept orientation is emphasized were very similar with regard to the degree of intensity or certainty with which expectations were held. (Author/SH)

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COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING:
TEACHING FUTURE CITIZENSHIP NORMS
VIA FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

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The initial reaction to a topic like "Communication and Learning" might be to turn to the classroom, and study the organized learning systems existing there. But it might be interesting to look outside of the classroom, and see what learning occurs in a less formal structure.

Many young children learn norms dealing with a citizen's opportunities to vote, work for candidates and political parties, and bring his opinions to politicians and newspapers. Yet these children are often too young to participate in the process themselves. They are told what they ought to do, yet are not able to actually fulfill these norms.

This study looks at the role of the family in teaching the child potential behaviors and norms for adult citizenship roles. It is concerned with orientations which an individual acquires, but cannot use for a period of time. Robert Merton has called this "anticipatory socialization."

Previous communications research has shown that the structure of the family's communication patterns plays an important role in the socialization of the child. Both the content and the method of parent-child communication are crucial: what the parent knows may be less significant than how he transmits it to the child. If NEW-THINK is to be concerned with communication and learning, then interpersonal communication occurring outside of the classroom may be just as important, if not more so, as communication occurring in a formal learning system.

This study of 1,300 families tests the hypothesis that a family communication environment stressing strong concept-orientations will stimulate a greater degree of anticipatory socialization than other types of environments. In particular, the combination of a weak socio-orientation with a strong concept-orientation should give the "pluralistic" child a greater awareness of his expected citizenship norms.

Results showed that pluralistic students expect that social norms will involve a greater level of political participation in terms of writing to politicians and newspapers, attending meetings and rallies, and working in political campaigns. More generally, students from homes where concept orientation is emphasized tend to think that these obligations will be expected of them. Analysis of intensity of norm learning found pluralistics and consensuals very similar with regards to the degree of certainty with which the expectations were held.

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FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND FUTURE CITIZENSHIP NORMS

A relatively new area of study which has attracted both communications researchers and political scientists is political socialization. This is the process by which political norms and behaviors are transmitted from generation to generation, and both the mass media and interpersonal communications are important factors in this developmental process.

This large field has been broken down into various subdivisions. In 1957, sociologist Robert Merton coined the term referring to the situation existing before an individual's accession to a group. Merton suggested that individuals aspiring to belong to a group may adopt the values of this group before actually joining. He called this "anticipatory socialization," defining it in general terms as a situation in which the individual acquires orientations of a group which he does not belong to, or cannot belong to for a period of time.¹

Within the past few years, several political scientists have

examined this specific type of socialization, and have likened it to sheer imitation, in which an individual attempts to mimic the actions of the group to which he aspires.² They have pointed out that the teaching of orientations and patterns of behavior to non-group members is often carried on with much purpose and planning, with the method of teaching often being as important as the content taught.

Most of the research in the general area of political socialization has been concerned with knowledge of, and affect for, familiar authority figures such as the President, the policeman, and other governmental people and objects the child encounters in school, at home, or via the mass media.³ But many of the orientations and norms the child learns are of no use to him at the time he learns them. They are clearly "anticipatory," and are patterns of behavior and modes of thought he must save until a later time. The young child might learn of the importance of voting, for example, yet the minimum age limit for voting in the various states is at least 18 years of age. He sees adults working for candidates and political parties, but is too young to effectively participate himself. He also learns of the responsiveness of the government — often acquiring the notion that citizens can talk directly with the President about their problems and requests.⁴ But again, the young child is still not able to bring his opinions to politicians or newspapers as the adult can.

What happens to a child who learns information he cannot use? Does he plan on using this knowledge at the proper time? Questions can be asked about the role of interpersonal communication in this

process. What can the family teach the child about potential behaviors he might use as an adult? What is the influence of the parents in teaching norms for adult citizenship roles? This study looks at these questions, and attempts to assess the role of the family in the anticipatory socialization of their children.

RELATED STUDIES

Stanton Wheeler has noted that there are few studies of this pre-entry "anticipatory" period. And even where these studies do exist, they tend to be confined to only one agency such as the school, the church, the family, or the mass media.⁵ Langton agrees that most socialization research has been on single agency analysis, explaining that researchers "are still in the process of isolating different characteristics of these institutions and their relationships to politics."⁶

Chaffee, Ward and Tipton point out, for example, that while there has been a great deal of research on political socialization, and on adolescent media-use, these areas rarely overlap. Most media-use studies usually involve younger children, while the political socialization studies usually look at political knowledge and trust, treating media-use as a dependent variable or as a secondary agent of socialization.⁷

Hess and Torney have described three types of anticipatory socialization. First is the acquisition of attitudes and values about adult roles. These form the basis for subsequent learning of specific behavior. Second is the acquisition of specific information which cannot be directly applied until later life. Finally,

the third type is the learning of skills which can be practiced in the immediate childhood situation and which will be called into play throughout life when the appropriate occasions arise.⁸

ROLE OF THE FAMILY

Certainly the family is of great importance in political socialization. Lane says that a father performs several basic methods of indoctrinating political values in his son. Among them is serving as a model for imitation so that the son can pick up the "loyalties, beliefs, and values" of the father.⁹

Jennings and Niemi also discuss the impact of the family:

Whether the child is conscious or unaware of the impact, whether the process is role-modeling or overt transmission, whether the values are political and directly usable or "nonpolitical" but transferable, and whether what is passed on lies in the cognitive or affective realm, it has been argued that the family is of paramount importance.¹⁰

Maccoby has added an interesting idea on the role of the family in political socialization. She suggests that the child practices the actions of the adults with whom he is frequently in contact, and thus acquires a "repertoire of actions." These covertly-practiced actions remain latent until a much later time, however, when the individual will be in a role position that the actions would suit.¹¹ Her hypothesis basically states that the child learns certain forms of political behavior from the parents, rehearses them covertly, and then manifests them when he is faced with a "real political role."

Riley, Foner, Hess and Toby believe that the parent often communicates to the adolescent expectations that the child may incorporate into his own self-expectations in the usual way.¹² Moore

says that maturation consists in part of "making more realistic judgments of objective opportunities and personal capacities." ¹³ While the child fumbles for an identity, he is preparing for a prospective identity.

Kagan and Moss suggest that during the age period 6 to 10, important changes begin occurring in children's behavior. One of the major events is that the child begins to identify with the parents and tries to adopt both the values and responses of the parents. These authors have been especially concerned with developmental continuities dealing with children's behavior. ¹⁴

The parents are thus major instruments in the political socialization process. How do they communicate norms and ideals for the child to imitate or follow?

FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Many researchers have found that the structure of the family's communication patterns contributes highly to the political socialization of the child. It can be viewed as accounting for more of the variance in political socialization than many factors within the family, including the parents' political knowledge and participation, and factors outside the family such as political stimulation from peers, school, and the mass media.

Of all the factors in adolescent development, the home is thus one of the most pervasive. Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman point out that the home is "the only social institution in which almost every child has been involved since birth." ¹⁵ Elkin says the family has a key role in affecting political orientations -- it has a dominant

role in the development of basic personality traits and other social attitudes and values.¹⁶ Dawson and Prewitt explain that the family has almost a monopoly on the child during his formative years, when "the foundation of his political self is being developed."¹⁷

Adolescence is an important time in the youth's life to study because family influences on socialization are at their peak. They have been accumulating for years, but career-centered socializing institutions have not affected the child yet.

Parent-child communication is important not only for the content but also for the method involved. Political socialization is not automatic. What the parent knows may be less important than how he transmits it to his child.¹⁸ Every family develops its own patterns of child-parent communication, with major and consistent differences arising between families in this pattern.

The "family communication patterns" theory proposed by McLeod and Chaffee is a conception of socialization which has been applied mainly in the political socialization area. Many studies in this area have hypothesized that competent participation in public affairs is stimulated by a particular type of communication pattern within the family.¹⁹

Parent-child relations are usually described as a one-dimensional portrayal of the family power structure. McLeod and Chaffee explain that usually dichotomies include "autocratic-democratic," "controlling-permissive," and "traditional-modern."²⁰ The study of communication presents a different picture, though. Several studies have shown at least two relatively uncorrelated dimensions of communication structure in families.²¹

The first dimension can be called socio-oriented. This type is indicated by the type of communication producing deference and fostering harmony and pleasant social relationships in the family. A child may be taught to defer to his elders, or give in on arguments rather than risk offending others.

The other dimension is concept-oriented. This is concerned with positive constraints which stimulate the child to develop his own views about the world. The child is urged to consider more than one side of an issue. The parents, for example, may encourage him to weigh all the evidence before deciding on an issue, or they may expose him to counter-arguments on various issues.

These two dimensions have proven uncorrelated in a variety of populations. The sample for this study has been divided into relatively "high" and "low" groups on each dimension, yielding a four-fold typology of family types with approximately equal numbers in each cell (See Table 1).

----- Table 1 about here -----

Chaffee et al.²² describe the four types of families according to the type of relations they stress. LAISSEZ-FAIRE families emphasize neither type of relation. Children are not prohibited from challenging parental views, and they are not exposed to information relevant to expressing independent ideas.

PROTECTIVE families stress socio-relations at the expense of concept-relations. The child is encouraged to get along with others by steering clear of the controversial realm of ideas. Not only is he prohibited from expressing dissent, but he is given little chance

to encounter information on which to base his views.

PLURALISTIC families emphasize the development of strong and varied concept-relations in an environment comparatively free of social restraints. The child is encouraged to explore new ideas and is often exposed to controversial material; thus, he can make up his own mind without fear that reaching a different conclusion from his parents will endanger social relations in the family.

CONSENSUAL families stress both types of relations. While the child is exposed to controversy, he is constrained to develop concepts that are consonant with the existing socio-relations. From the child's viewpoint, he should learn his parents' ideas and adopt their values.

Not all families conform perfectly to these types. In some, one parent may stress ideas; the other may stress social relations. Even different children within one family may receive different emphases from the parents.

McLeod and Chaffee have also reported that blue-collar homes show some tendency to stress the socio-orientation, while white-collar families give more attention to concept-orientation.²³

Based on these types of family communication patterns, the basic hypothesis is offered that a family communication environment stressing strong concept-orientations will stimulate a greater degree of anticipatory socialization than the other types of environments. In particular, the combination of a weak socio-orientation with the strong concept-orientation should give a pluralistic child a greater awareness of his expected citizenship norms.

It is hypothesized that the children from the pluralistic homes will be more aware of their rights and obligations as citizens

including the opportunities to work in campaigns, write to politicians, and attend political meetings. Both the factors of the pluralistic home — weak socio-orientation and strong concept-orientation — should work together to stimulate anticipatory socialization. Furthermore, the children from the consensual homes also receive a strong concept-orientation, although their socio-orientations are higher than the pluralistics. It is thus hypothesized that these consensuals should have a greater expectation of citizenship norms than the two low concept-orientation groups, but not as much as the pluralistics.

The pluralistic child, lacking socio-oriented restraints, is free to find new ways of thinking and is urged to express them, even if others disagree. It is the level of concept orientation emphasis that stimulates him to do so. By contrast, the consensual child, who is also exposed to a strong concept-orientation, is nonetheless affected by the constraints toward social harmony. The protective and laissez-faire children lack the necessary stimulation from the home to seek information and express their ideas.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The data used in this study was collected in a 1968 survey in five eastern Wisconsin cities of 1,300 families. A child from each family completed two self-administered questionnaires in school in May and November, and one parent of each child was interviewed afterward. A wide range of political and socioeconomic groupings were provided in selection of cities. According to the 1960 census, the populations of the cities, located in Milwaukee and Fox River

Valley regions, ranged from 17,000 to 68,000.

The sample was about equally divided between two grade levels—the junior high sample contained seventh-graders in May and eighth-graders in November; the senior high group consisted of tenth-graders in May and eleventh-graders in November.

In order to measure the amount of socio-orientation within the family, the parent and child were asked separately about a number of kinds of interaction that would encourage this type of orientation in the youngster. The scores were then summed to provide a single index for each parent-child pair. Some of the typical items for socio-orientation were:

1. (Parent) urges (child) to give in on arguments rather than risk antagonizing others.
2. (Parent) answers (child's) arguments by saying something like, "You'll know better when you grow up."
3. (Parent) lets (child) know that (child) should not show anger in a group.
4. (Parent) stresses that there are some things in life that are either right or wrong.
5. (Parent) says that the best way to stay out of trouble is to keep away from it.
6. (Parent) says that discussions are better if you keep them pleasant.

The concept-orientation relation was measured similarly; frequency and emphasis estimates by parent and child were summed across many items, providing a single index of concept-orientation. Sample items include:

1. (Parent) encourages (child) to challenge (parent's) ideas and beliefs.

2. (Parent) asks (child's) opinion when family is discussing something.
3. (Parent and child) have family talks about topics like politics or religion, where some persons take different sides from others.
4. (Parent) says that (child) should always look at both sides of an issue before making up (child's) mind.
5. (Parent) argues about things like politics or religion when visiting with friends or relatives, when (child) is present.

Anticipatory socialization was measured by three questions to the child: "For these statements, what do you think other people will feel are your obligations when you are 25 to do these things?" An answer scale ranged from "must do this" and "probably should" to "may or may not," "probably should not," and "must not do this." There was also space for a "don't know" response. The three items were:

- a. Work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.
- b. Write to politicians or newspapers when you have strong opinions on current.
- c. Attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.

These measures deal with one specific aspect of anticipatory socialization: norm learning — the expectations people have for your behavior. The items were intended to measure the extent to which these students have learned various norms for adult citizenship roles. The three items above represent potential behaviors an adult might use as a citizen.

Differences in the level of norm learning across the four family types indicate the direction and degree of norm learning,

ranging from "must do this" to "must not do this." In addition, the intensity of norm learning and the number of "don't know" responses are examined to determine if students with a strong concept-orientation, especially those from the pluralistic homes, tend to gain stronger normative expectations, regardless of direction. It is predicted that these adolescents will be more certain of the obligations that are expected of them as citizens.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On each dependent variable, about 10% of the overall sample reported that they didn't know what other people will feel are their obligations. Most of the students thought that others will feel that they probably should or may or may not have obligations to participate in the political system. On the five-step scale (must do this = 5, through must not do this = 1), writing to politicians and newspapers was rated most positively ($\bar{x}$ = 3.46), followed closely by attending rallies or meetings (3.43). The obligation to work in political campaigns was slightly lower (3.32). The mean intensity of participation for the three variables followed a similar pattern (writing to politicians and newspapers, 1.52; attending meetings or rallies, 1.50, and working in political campaigns, 1.35).

The main analysis involves differences according to the pattern of family communication experienced by the child. As predicted, Table 2 shows that the students from pluralistic homes ranked highest on each dependent variable (overall $\bar{x}$ = 10.61), followed by consensuals in each case (10.30). The laissez-faire and protectives

were much lower (9.95, 9.92). The differences between pluralistics and each of the other three groups is significant ($p < .05$, t-tests), and the magnitude of these differences does not vary substantially from one type of participation to another.

----- Table 2 about here -----

As Table 3 shows, the pluralistics and consensuals were very similar with respect to the intensity of norm learning. Overall, the pluralistics had a slightly lower proportion indicating that they did not know what others will expect of them when they are 25 years old. (overall $\bar{x} = 4.55$ vs. 4.52; 6.7% vs. 8.3%). The protectives ranked third (overall $\bar{x} = 4.32$), and the laissez-faires were lowest (4.09). Overall, the children from families where concept orientation was emphasized (pluralistics and consensuals) had an average 7% "don't know" rate, compared to 12% among those with backgrounds where concept orientation was not emphasized, a significant difference ($< .001$, chi-square test). The overall intensity of high-concept groups was also significantly higher than that of low-concept groups ($p < .01$, t-test).

----- Table 3 about here -----

To explore the relative contribution of the socio and concept factors in anticipatory socialization, overall correlations between each dimension and the level of the three dependent variables were analyzed. Table 4 shows that the zero-order correlation coefficient between concept orientation and working in political campaigns is +.14; for writing to politicians and newspapers, the

correlation is $+.12$, and the correlation is $+.16$ for attending rallies or meetings. All of these correlations are significant ($p < .01$). The predicted negative relationships were obtained on the socio dimension, although the correlations were not strong ($-.04$ overall). Thus, socio-orientation was negligibly related to the political participation variables, while concept-orientation was consistently associated with these measures in the hypothesized direction.

----- Table 4 about here -----

Table 4 also reports the partial correlations for these variables, controlling for both parental education and income. Since there is a slight tendency for children from a higher socio-economic background to be in the pluralistic category, while those from lower SES homes tend to experience a laissez-faire or protective family communication environment, the effect of this factor was statistically controlled. The results indicate only a slight decrease in the magnitude of the relationships, and the concept orientation correlations remain significant at the $.01$ level (see Table 4).

The correlations between concept orientation and the intensity of norm learning on each measure were slightly lower: $+.11$ for working in campaigns; $+.08$ for writing to politicians and newspapers, and $+.11$ for attending rallies or meetings (See Table 5). Socio orientation was actually positively related to these measures, and these correlations increase when SES was controlled.

----- Table 5 about here -----

The overall evidence lends support to the hypothesis that students with a strong concept-orientation (especially the pluralistics) expect that social norms will involve a great level of political participation during adulthood. More generally, children from homes where a concept orientation is emphasized tend to think that these obligations were expected of them. The socio dimension seems to make only a slight contribution to the level of norm learning, and was unexpectedly positively related to the intensity. Although all differences are highly significant, it should be pointed out that the statistical tests performed are sensitive to the large number of respondents involved in this investigation. Nevertheless, basic findings indicate that family communication patterns have a limited impact on the anticipatory socialization of adolescents. It appears that the factor of the family communication environment in the home plays an important role in political socialization and deserves further investigation.

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TABLE 1

Family Communication Pattern Typology

		Concept-Oriented Communication	
		Low	High
Socio-Oriented Communication	Low	Laissez-faire (N = 345)	Pluralistic (N = 317)
	High	Protective (N = 277)	Consensual (N = 353)

Table 2

Mean Level of Political Participation Norm Learning,
by Family Communication Pattern Typology

	High Concept		High Socio	
	<u>Pluralistic</u>	<u>Consensual</u>	<u>Laissez-Faire</u>	<u>Protective</u>
	(N = 317)	(N = 353)	(N = 345)	(N = 277)
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.				
<u>mean</u>	3.42	3.37	3.23	3.24
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.				
<u>mean</u>	3.60	3.47	3.41	3.35
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.				
<u>mean</u>	3.59	3.46	3.32	3.33
Overall sum of three measures				
<u>overall mean</u>	10.61	10.30	9.95	9.92

-
- 5 = must do this
 4 = probably should do this
 3 = may or may not do this; don't know
 2 = probably should not do this
 1 = must not do this

Table 3

Mean Intensity of Political Participation Norm Learning,
by Family Communication Pattern Typology

	High Concept		High Socio	
	Pluralistic	Consensual	Laissez-Faire	Protective
	(N = 317)	(N = 353)	(N = 345)	(N = 277)
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.				
<u>mean</u>	1.39	1.43	1.23	1.35
<u>percentage of "don't knows"</u>	6.0%	6.4%	14.2%	9.3%
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.				
<u>mean</u>	1.59	1.54	1.45	1.49
<u>percentage of "don't knows"</u>	8.1%	8.0%	12.3%	9.2%
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.				
<u>mean</u>	1.57	1.56	1.41	1.47
<u>percentage of "don't knows"</u>	6.7%	8.3%	14.9%	10.0%
Overall sum of three measures				
<u>overall mean</u>	4.55	4.52	4.09	4.32
<u>overall percentage of "don't knows"</u>	6.9%	7.6%	13.8%	9.5%

3 = must do this; must not do this

2 = probably should do this; probably should not do this

1 = may or may not do this

0 = don't know

Table 4

Relationships between Socio- and Concept-Orientation and
Level of Norm Learning, Controlling Family Socio-Economic Status

	<u>Concept-Orientation</u>		<u>Socio-Orientation</u>	
	<u>Raw r</u>	<u>Partial r</u>	<u>Raw r</u>	<u>Partial r</u>
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.	+.14	+.12	-.02	+.01
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.	+.12	+.11	-.06	-.03
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.	+.16	+.14	-.02	.00
Overall sum of three measures	+.18	+.16	-.04	-.01

(Partial r controls for years of education and amount of income, as reported by the parent).

Note: Cell entries are Pearson rs, and differ from zero at the following significance levels:

$r \geq .08, p < .05$

$r \geq .10, p < .01$

$r \geq .13, p < .001$

Concept-orientation is scored from 50 (low) to 150 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate positively with norm learning variables.

Socio-orientation is scored from 40 (low) to 140 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate negatively with norm learning variables.

Table 5

Relationships between Socio- and Concept-Orientation and
Intensity of Norm Learning, Controlling Family Socio-Economic Status

	<u>Concept-Orientation</u>		<u>Socio-Orientation</u>	
	<u>Raw r</u>	<u>Partial r</u>	<u>Raw r</u>	<u>Partial r</u>
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.	+.11	+.09	+.06	+.09
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.	+.08	+.07	.00	+.02
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.	+.11	+.10	+.03	+.05
Overall sum of three measures	+.12	+.10	+.03	+.06

(Partial r controls for years of education and amount of income, as reported by the parent).

Note: Cell entries are Pearson rs and differ from zero at the following significance levels:

$r \geq .08, p < .05$

$r \geq .10, p < .01$

$r \geq .13, p < .001$

Concept-orientation is scored from 50 (low) to 150 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate positively with norm learning variables.

Socio-orientation is scored from 40 (low) to 140 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate negatively with norm learning variables.